

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:19-25 – Holding Fast

June 21, 2009

- I. **Hebrews 10:19-25** . . . Therefore, brethren, **since** we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, [21] **and since** we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] **let us** draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] **Let us** hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; [24] and **let us** consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, [25] not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

II. Prayer

III. Review – Let Us Draw Near

- A. **Since** we have confidence to enter the holy place – by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, and **since** we have a great priest over the house of God . . . **let us draw near**.
1. Being saved from eternal damnation in hell is one of the more powerful drawing points for those who repent of their rebellion against God and put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the penalty of sin.
 2. However, using God for our own benefit is an adolescent approach to Christianity. And as may already be obvious to you, the adolescent mindset is one where self-focus most often surpasses God-focus and where self-love fights for dominance over our love for God. For those whose growth in spiritual maturity takes them beyond an adolescent mindset, intimate fellowship with God in the form of ongoing communion and companionship becomes the most powerful motivation for drawing near to God.
 3. Here is the principle – when we love God so that He is our most valued treasure, drawing near in order to dwell in His presence and fellowship with Him throughout each day becomes our most prized activity.

- B. And so as I pointed out last Sunday, Christ made the way for us to confidently come into the presence of God. Humility is to be our attitude. Holiness of heart and behavior is to be our condition.
- C. Today I want to talk to us about holding fast the confession of our hope and stimulating one another to love and good deeds. To help us keep our focus on the bigger picture, I want to remind you that last Sunday's teaching and today's teaching make up a single, three part unit in the text of **Hebrews 10:19-25**.

IV. Let Us Hold Fast

- A. **Hebrews 10:23** . . . Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful . . .
 - 1. Hold fast the confession of our hope
 - a. To hold fast our confession speaks of clinging to our determination to live each moment of the day – in both our public and private moments – to live each moment of the day according to our public profession of faith in God through Jesus Christ and our public claim to be born again Christians.
 - b. In the most practical sense, holding fast the confession of our hope is to cling to godly desiring, godly thinking, godly speaking, and godly living. And to cling means to hold on to these things as tightly and tenaciously as possible.
 - 2. WHY? Because this is one very powerful way to persevere as a Christian to the end of your life so that you do not fall away from the faith or compromise your love for God or allow some particular sin to gain or even regain a hold in your life.
- B. Remember how much of Hebrews is built on Old Testament history?
 - 1. Well, drawing from that history we see what happened to the Israelites who did not hold fast the confession of their hope.
 - 2. For example, three days after crossing the Red Sea on their way out of Egypt, they came into circumstances that were hard and challenging to their faith in God. And what was their response? They got mad at God and Moses for letting them get into such unwanted circumstances.
 - 3. Oh sure, they were headed to the Promised Land where life would be immeasurably better than life in Egypt. And after crossing the Red Sea and watching the Egyptian army get destroyed by the same sea, they publicly confessed their trust in God and worshiped Him with what we call today, *The Song Of Moses* (Exodus 15).

4. Yet within three days of the public confession of their hope, the Promised Land lost its attraction and they threw away their hope of attaining it when they realized that the way there required them to pass through difficult, trying, faith challenging circumstances.
 5. And what did they replace their hope of the Promised Land with? A hope for an easier, more personally comfortable, less challenging, less faith-building life. And where did they think they could find that life? Back in Egypt.
- C. I trust it is apparent from the example I just gave why God says we must hold fast our hope; why we must cling to our hope; why we must hold on to our hope as tightly and tenaciously as possible. For if we don't, we will respond to hard times, difficult situations, unpleasant people, and faith challenging circumstances just like Israel did those many years ago.
1. Without a shadow of doubt – just as hard times came to the Israelites to test their faith, to strengthen their confidence in God, to nurture their love for God, and to mature them as God's children – just as surely hard times will come to every Christian, and that includes us.
 2. And just as surely as God meant those hard times for good in the life of Israel, so He means them for good in our life too.
 3. And just as surely as Israel was powerfully tempted to forsake the confession of their hope – to step away from trusting God implicitly, to abandon love of God for love of self, to throw off godliness for ease of life and pleasure of body, so we will be powerfully tempted to forsake all of those same godly things for temporary, sin-exalting relief or comfort.
- D. Hard times, difficult people, faith challenging circumstances, discontent, self-pity, selfishness, lust driven desires, a longing for recognition and acceptance, and other such things as these war against our pursuit of God, our love for God, and our commitment to live a godly life. And are not these the very things we sing about and testify to wanting as Christians?
1. Now I don't want you to think that Satan is not involved in hard times. Even when such times come directly from our loving Father, you can be certain that the devil is right there to tempt you to forsake God, to turn away from trusting God, and to resist what

God is wanting to do in you. And what does the devil tempt us toward? Ease of life, pleasure of body, and comfort of mind.

2. Every hard time, every difficult person, every challenging circumstance, every test of our faith brings with it the potential of falling away from what we claim to believe, from who we claim to love, and from what we claim to want to be.

E. What does this mean for us? If we are going to pass through hard times and remain faithful to our confession of hope,

1. we must choose to hold fast to God,
2. we must choose to hold fast to our love for God,
3. we must choose to hold fast to our intimate relationship with God,
4. we must choose to draw near to God – and hopefully because we long for Him to draw near to us,
5. we must choose to hold fast to hungering and thirsting for righteousness,
6. we must choose to hold fast to contentment with what God has allowed,
7. we must choose to hold fast to cooperation with what God is doing and what He wants to do in us,
8. we must choose to hold fast to bringing honor to God with our thoughts, words, and actions,
9. we must choose to hold fast to the value of growing up to spiritual maturity and great faith,
10. **In essence**, we must choose to hold fast to becoming what Jesus Christ saved us to be – which is, according to Romans 8:29 – to be conformed to his own likeness.

F. For those who are young in the faith and for those who ought to be teachers by now but are still too immature to be God-approved teachers – holding fast seems exceedingly hard in the face of trials and tribulations. Indeed, at those difficult moments, falling away seems incredibly easy.

1. The truth is, God will not allow any of His children to be tempted or tried beyond their current ability to resist the temptation to let go of what should be held firm or to take hold of what never should be held again.
2. In spite of the fact that we may think holding fast is just too hard sometimes, and in spite of our reinforcing that belief by talking with others who easily give up or give in to temptation, the truth

is different from our perception. Even the newest, the weakest, the most immature among us is guarded by God against temptation stronger than what we can handle.

3. However, there is a consideration that I must make clear. If we put off growing up in the faith or drag our feet when it comes to maturing in godliness, God will push us harder and harder to take the confession of our hope seriously.
 - a. In other words, God will discipline us according to our need of discipline.
 - b. And if by our own foolishness we need very difficult times to bring us to our senses, God will bring very difficult times into our life.

G. Now lest we think God's exhortation to hold fast is only spoken of once in the scriptures and therefore not to be taken so seriously, I am going to remind you of what we have already covered in our study of Hebrews about this very truth. Prior to today's teaching on **Hebrews 10:23**, we see that God has already warned us about falling away four times.

1. **Hebrews 2:1** . . . For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.
2. **Hebrews 3:6** . . . but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house – those house we are, **if we hold fast** our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.
3. **Hebrews 3:14** . . . For we have become partakers of Christ, **if we hold fast** the beginning of our assurance firm until the end. . .
4. **Hebrews 4:14-16** . . . Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our confession**. [15] For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. [16] Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

H. In conclusion, I want to draw your attention to the final words in **Hebrews 10:23** . . . Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, **for He who promised is faithful**.

1. God is calling us to be faithful to our commitment to trust Him, to love Him, and to live for Him.

2. In giving us this call, He points to one of His own attributes as a motivating reason to be faithful ourselves – **HIS FAITHFULNESS!!**
3. And here is the point I want us to see as clearly as possible. God is faithful, and we are the blessed recipients of His faithfulness. And it is because of His faithfulness that our hope is not something we wish for, but something we are certain of. Therefore, if He is faithful and if His faithfulness is so intended to richly bless us, how can we be less than faithful to Him?

V. Conclusion: Holding fast the confession of our hope does not stand alone as an exhortation from God. This portion of Hebrews puts three exhortations together – let us draw near, let us hold fast, and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Each is of equal importance to the others. And without question, each is of supreme importance to our Christian life if we intend to live as we have been saved to live.